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UNCLAS YEREVAN 001562

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED: GOAM ADDRESSING THE THREAT OF AVIAN FLU

REF: STATE 153802

[1](#)1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

[1](#)2. (SBU) On August 23, Ambassador delivered reftel points to Haik Melik Darbinyan, First Deputy Minister of Health, Prof. Vladimir Davidiants, Chief of Public Health and Sanitation, and Liana Torosyan, Ministry of Health Coordinator of Influenza Response. Davidiants was introduced as the GOAM's primary point of contact for avian flu. According to Darbinyan, the Ministries of Health and Agriculture are drafting a National Flu Preparedness Plan that will be submitted for inter-ministerial review by September 1. The plan details preventative measures, vaccination protocols and appropriate responses to an outbreak. Darbinyan requested that a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) expert review the draft plan once it is complete.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Darbinyan told us the GOAM receives monthly updates from the governments of Iran, Georgia and Russia concerning the avian flu threat and is working closely with the CDC and the World Health Organization. According to Darbinyan, the GOAM and Azerbaijan have agreed to work together in the event of a public health emergency. On August 2, the Ministry of Agriculture announced a ban on Russian poultry in response to the avian flu threat.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Comment: The GOAM is well aware of the threat posed by avian influenza and is taking steps to ensure that proper preventative measures are in place and that there will be an appropriate response should an outbreak occur. The GOAM is working closely with neighboring countries and international organizations. CDC epidemiologist Scott McNabb plans to visit Yerevan in late September as part of a program to combat tuberculosis. Post suggests that the CDC extend his mission to include a review of the GOAM's Flu Preparedness Plan.  
EVANS